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5-4-2015

May 4, 2015: Choosing to be Good Without God

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Repository Citation

Ledewitz, B. (2015). May 4, 2015: Choosing to be Good Without God. Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism/928>

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Title: Choosing to be Good Without God

Date: 2015-05-04T05:00:00.004-04:00

5/4/2015—I had no idea that there had been a particular Christian response to the claim that atheists can be good without God. Last night I watched the beginning of *Time Changer*, a self-identified Christian movie from 2002. In the movie, a Professor at Grace Seminary in 1890 has written a book that argues that the Church should teach morality without attaching that teaching to the authority of Jesus Christ. Another Professor, who has seen where such teaching leads because his father invented a time machine, opposes Seminary endorsement of the book. To settle the matter, he sends the author into our future to see for himself. Not a great movie, but a great question. Satan does not oppose morality. Satan's enemy is Jesus Christ. People who suppose that if they are good people, they are going to heaven are in for a shock when they end up in hell. We do see today the decline in confidence about the good and all sorts of experiments are going forward to find a solid ground for making judgments. Sam Harris argues that science can show us what is good. Peter Singer is arguing in a recent book—*The Most Good You Can Do*—that reason leads us to what he calls effective altruism. And so forth. The problem is not deciding to do good. The social crisis is that doing the good becomes merely a personal choice. The decline is not in morality as much as it is in authority, just as the movie argues. So, the question is not what is good. The question is what is binding. Or, as Heidegger is translated—"what holds sway." Here is where many modern people have a problem—with any claim of authority.